

I would like to express my support for this bill as a citizen of the County.

The arguments against it seem to be anecdotal, and lacking supporting data from other jurisdictions. There is no data given by the opponents showing that the County obtained data is in error. This is the case for both the arguments that people will be reluctant to call or for a decline in contributions.

The contribution argument appears to be addressed by the guarantee of making up any documented decline in an LFRD that sees a decrease.

A portion of the fees should go to automatic increases in both the County and the LFRD budgets to at least keep pace with inflation, something that is not now occurring especially at the LFRD level.

I first heard of this proposal in 1991, when research into the costs of the delivery of service were being explored. Had this fee been imposed two years later, in 1993, we would have collected 15 years worth of fees. The amounts not collected, at whatever rate was charged, are staggering. To continue to leave \$14 to \$16 million or more annually uncollected, the equivalent of a penny on the property tax rate, just doesn't make sense.

Had the County imposed the fee 15 years ago, and collected \$1 million in the first year and seen the amount increase by \$1 million per year, we would now be at the \$16 million dollar mark, and we would have collected at least \$120 million over those 15 years. Had the collection rate been \$5 million per year for each of the first five years, \$10 million per year for the next five, and \$15 million for the past five years, the amount not collected exceeds \$150 million. That's far too much to leave on the table.

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